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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Hurricane Katrina
- [1](#)2. U.S.-Israel Relations
- [1](#)3. Syrian-Lebanese Track
- [1](#)4. Israeli Arabs

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz notes that the international community is putting pressure on Israel to allow the Palestinians freedom of movement between Gaza and Egypt via the Rafah crossing. The newspaper quoted a senior diplomatic official as saying that no one in the world will recognize Israel's withdrawal from Gaza without a solution for Rafah, and that the problem should be solved before PM Sharon leaves for the UN General Assembly, if he wants an enthusiastic welcome there.

During the weekend, all media prominently featured the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Leading media reported that Israel is sending 80 tons of humanitarian aid to the disaster victims. On Monday, Yediot reported that a delegation of Defense Ministry and Health Ministry staff was leaving that evening for the U.S., in order to coordinate with the U.S. administration the Israeli aid for victims of the hurricane. Yediot reported that top U.S. administration officials have asked Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Danny Ayalon for tents, blankets, pillows, food, beds and medical equipment. Yediot writes that the Americans also need generators, plastic sheeting, wheel chairs, bedding, K-rations, first aid kits, cleaning materials, shaving kits, pillows and water containers. Various organizations have called on Israelis to donate funds. Yediot reported that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz has instructed the IDF to prepare for the dispatching of a large military delegation comprising Home Front personnel, divers, psychologists, public health specialists, and victim identification specialists. The newspaper reported that some American sources favor such help, but that others are opposed. On Sunday, Jerusalem Post reported that Tel Aviv University's school of medicine is offering slots to medical students unable to attend classes at Tulane University in New Orleans. Leading media reported that an Israeli man and an AmCit of Israeli origin are missing.

Ha'aretz reported that GOI and security sources denied reports that appeared on Monday, according to which 3,000 new housing units were to be built in the West Bank town of Ariel. The sources said that last month, Mofaz approved the marketing of only 117 new units. Education Minister Limor Livnat (Likud) was quoted as saying in interviews with various media that Israel has paid a hefty tribute during the disengagement and that Israel should build the E-1 area between Jerusalem and Ma'aleh Adumim even at the cost of a confrontation with the U.S. Ha'aretz cited a portion of the State

Comptroller's annual report that says that the authorities turn a blind eye to land grabs in the territories.

Maariv reported that the Israeli Embassy in Washington has asked the GOI not to remove its assistance request from the U.S. from the agenda, despite the heavy cost of Hurricane Katrina to the USG. Maariv cited an Israeli Embassy estimate that disengagement-related U.S. aid to Israel will amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars over two years.

Jerusalem Post quoted diplomatic officials as saying that a trilateral meeting headed by Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn to deal with the Rafah crossing issue that was scheduled for Monday was postponed because of "scheduling problems" and will be held before the end of the week. The meeting was to include Mofaz, Wolfensohn and a PA minister. Leading media reported that on Monday, for the first time, Palestinian officers visited Gush Katif areas that were evacuated.

On Sunday, leading media reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday called to resume the peace talks with Israel immediately after the IDF completes its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and that he hoped that a Palestinian state would be established by next year.

All media quoted FM Silvan Shalom as saying Monday that it is "quite likely" that President Hosni Mubarak will come to Israel in November for ceremonies to mark the 10th anniversary of former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination. Israel Radio cited an official Egyptian denial of the report. Leading media reported that Jordan's King Abdullah II canceled his visit to Israel and he will meet Sharon only at the UN General Assembly next week in New York. On Sunday, various media cited a statement by the Pakistani Foreign Ministry that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf will not meet with Sharon when the two are in New York later this month. The media cited the possibility of Sharon meeting Abbas during or after the UN General Assembly convention.

Ha'aretz cited an official announcement by the Foreign Ministry of the United Arab Emirates denying reports that Israel has diplomatic envoys in Dubai, saying they are "false rumors." Leading media reported that Israel is continuing to reap diplomatic benefits in the Arab and Muslim worlds from the Gaza pullout. Hatzofe reported that two senior Foreign Ministry officials have recently made a secret visit to Morocco to explore the possibility of renewing relations with that country.

During the weekend, leading media quoted Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah as saying on Friday that he would consider disarming his organization in return for certain international, but not American, assurances.

Citing AP, Jerusalem Post reported on Sunday that a U.S. district judge in New York upheld three lawsuits Friday accusing the Jordan-based Arab Bank of promoting Palestinian suicide attacks by funneling Saudi money to bombers' families.

On Sunday, Jerusalem Post cited the U.S. Congressional Research Service's annual report, according to which Egypt has become the largest buyer of weapons in the Middle East over the last four years.

All media reported that President Bush has nominated John Roberts to be chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ha'aretz reported that Israel, the EU, and the European Space Agency will sign an agreement today allowing Israel to join the European alliance's Galileo space program.

Ha'aretz published the results of a Dialogue Institute survey conducted Sunday and Monday among Likud party members, which shows that support for MK Binyamin Netanyahu in the party is lessening:

- "If party primaries were held tomorrow, whom would you vote for as party chair?" Sharon: 36 percent; Netanyahu: 24 percent; "chief rebel" Knesset Member Uzi Landau: 19 percent; and Moshe Feiglin (far-Right Likud faction): 8 percent.

1. Hurricane Katrina:

Summary:

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "In the painful weeks ahead for the American people and its leadership, Israel should concentrate on offering its finest in the search and rescue field and providing disaster assistance for the refugees."

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "This is ... an opportunity [for Israelis] to skip over the administration in Washington -- to connect for the first time, with the people, without mediation, without politicians."

Novelist and contributor Yitzhak Laor wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The vision of Robinson Crusoe has been reborn: a society in which no one is responsible for anyone else.... What about the poor? Let them die."

Veteran columnist Yaron London wrote in mass-circulation Yediot Aharonot: "America is determined to spread democracy, but it denies life, as simply as that. Perhaps now its eyes will open."

Block Quotes:

I. "Helping America"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (September 6): "[Global financial] burdens do not diminish the American interest in showing support for Israel, including in the form of military and economic assistance. Such support remains integral to advancing American values and strategy, all the more so in the context of the global struggle against militant Islamism and the extraordinary risks and sacrifices Israel has just taken for peace. In the longer term, U.S. assistance for Israel is still in America's interest. But in the painful weeks ahead for the American people and its leadership, Israel should concentrate on offering its finest in the search and rescue field and providing disaster assistance for the refugees. Even superpowers, especially this superpower, deserve a helping hand in their hour of need."

II. "Friends in Time of Need"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (September 4): "For over 30 years, the U.S. has been the primary, often vital, support for our existence here.... Now, the American taxpayer needs us. True, the help we can offer is insignificant. The aid we can offer is symbolic. The Americans must see and realize that people in Israel are attentive to them, and that their souls reach out to them in their distress. We must open our hearts, our pockets, and our souls. This is the time and this is the test of whether we can prove that beyond disputes, arguments, and outposts, there is an eternal covenant, a covenant of blood between the Americans and us. This is also an opportunity to skip over the administration in Washington -- to connect for the first time, with the people, without mediation, without politicians. Heart to heart, people to people, because friends are measured in times of distress, and the distress is here."

III. "No Noah's Ark in New Orleans"

Veteran columnist Yaron London wrote in mass-circulation Yediot Aharonot (September 4): "The disaster in the southern states of the U.S. reverberates not only because it is the most terrible of natural disasters to occur in recent years, but because it is taking place in the most developed county in the world.... Few doubts remain as to the link between the caprices of nature and the effect of greenhouse gases. America is the main reason that we do not do enough to curb their emission into the atmosphere. Its citizens, who number no more than 3 percent of the world's population, consume a fifth of the energy used by humanity and are unwilling to curtail their greed. America is determined to spread democracy, but it denies life, as simply as that. Perhaps now its eyes will open."

IV. "Let the Poor Die"

Novelist and contributor Yitzhak Laor wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (September 6): "Ever since Ronald Reagan became president of the United States, politics in the West has been flourishing under the motto attributed to former British prime minister

Margaret Thatcher: there is no society, there are only individuals.... From within all this, the vision of Robinson Crusoe has been reborn: a society in which no one is responsible for anyone else. In the South, where the struggles for riding on 'integrated buses' marked the beginning of the struggle for equality in the U.S., the world has discovered that there are no buses, there are no trains, and there are no public services. The state mechanism, which had been the greatest democratic achievement of all -- not the army, but rather the public services -- was depicted in all the temples of the new religion as one of the attributes of the Devil, who must be overcome. What about the poor? Let them die."

12. U.S.-Israel Relations:

Summary:

Senior columnist Dan Margalit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "The shadows are spreading, even though 'never was our relationship with the U.S. so good.'"

Block Quotes:

"Truly a Wonderful Relationship?"

Senior columnist Dan Margalit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (September 6): "In the same way that the universe as seen from the telescopes of space researchers is always expanding, so Israeli governments throughout the generations describe the relationship with the U.S. as constantly improving.... It is therefore only natural that the Prime Minister and his close team highlight [Sharon's] achievement, which is real, but sweep the difficulties under the rug.... After disengagement, an American trend is evident of preferring the chances of Abu Mazen's political survival to any other political issue. Sharon and Shaul Mofaz and Dov Weisglass know this, but when an election year starts, no government wants to hear such discordant notes, and certainly not inform the public. If we are indeed a 'mature' people ... then there is a democratic obligation to provide the public with a variety of information on the most important and delicate relationship with the U.S., including any warning signals. There are still good reasons to adopt the government's assessment that the relationship that it has developed with Bush and his administration is a considerable achievement, but the jubilation over them for election needs is out of place. The shadows are spreading, even though 'never was our relationship with the U.S. so good.'"

13. Syrian-Lebanese Track:

Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Developments in Lebanon and Syria ... could bode well for the Syrian and Lebanese peoples, as well as for their southern neighbor. Israel must refrain from any involvement that would prevent this scenario from being realized."

Block Quotes:

"Movement in Syria and Lebanon"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (September 5): "Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah delivered a surprise this weekend when he declared that his organization would agree to disarm if it received guarantees of security in Lebanon from an international party (other than the United States). Although it conditioned its disarmament on the end of Israel's occupation of 'Lebanese territory,' that is, the Sheba Farms, this is the first time that Nasrallah has made such a declaration. This declaration is obviously very interesting to Israel, even though it was not meant primarily for Israel's ears: Hizbullah is one of the main focuses of the struggle now taking place in Lebanon.... [Other] developments in Lebanon and Syria -- the progress in the investigation of Hariri's murder and the increasing international pressure on Assad -- could bode well for the Syrian and Lebanese peoples, as well as for their southern

neighbor. Israel must refrain from any involvement that would prevent this scenario from being realized."

4. Israeli Arabs:

Summary:

Editor-in-Chief Lutfi Mashour wrote in independent, moderate Arabic-language Assennara: " What is left for [the government] to say is that being an Arab you can't be a victim."

Block Quotes:

"Killing Them All Over Again"

Editor-in-Chief Lutfi Mashour wrote in independent, moderate Arabic-language Assennara (September 2): "The decision [of the interministerial committee headed by a Defense Ministry official] not to consider the victims of the Shfaram [terrorist attack] as victims of terror [under the Victims of Enemy Action Law] is like killing them all over again. This is a grave assault to our dignity and legitimacy.... Is the Jew immunized and infallible from terror? What is left for [the government] to say is that being an Arab you can't be a victim.... However, the truth should be told: the Prime Minister's Office has asked Attorney General Mazuz to reexamine the committee's decision, which is a good move that we hope will succeed.... However as I said before, we can never forget and accept such a hideous decision and attitude."

KURTZER